

# the RED ROCK RAG



Volume 21,#2  
Winter 2019

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## President's Report

I can't take a hike in Red Rock Canyon without remembering how close it came to being developed with gates to lock out the public who had already been locked out for for the last 90 years.

Just how precious and valuable the open space is to the public was so apparent to me this summer when I spent several hours on Saturday and Sunday during the "Red Rock Canyon Bioblitz" at an information table for the Friends of Red Rock Canyon at the pavilion.

The diversity of people and reasons for being there were truly incredible. Some people were there for a walk or hike in the beauty and solitude of the canyon. Young couples with kids in tow or in strollers. Older folks trying to keep fit or just enjoy the beauty and solitude. A Ranger had a group of people at the pond amazed at the different bugs he was able to scoop up in a net. Lots of cyclists on a variety of bikes. Climbers draped in ropes

and hardware, bird watchers, photographers, fossil hunters, joggers and the list just goes on. I have even seen a group early in mornings practicing yoga at the pavilion. So I am eternally grateful for everyone that preserved this gem of a property for millions of people to enjoy for as long us humans are lucky enough to roam the planet.



[www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org](http://www.redrockcanyonopenspace.org)

## Red Rock Canyon BioBlitz

The first BioBlitz in Red Rock Canyon was held this past summer, the weekend of July 19th. A BioBlitz, as defined by the National Geographic Society, is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area over a short period of time. At a BioBlitz, scientists, families, students, teachers, and other community members work together to get a snapshot of an area's biodiversity. BioBlitzes have been happening the last 2 years at several Parks and Open Spaces in our area. Some have simply been the recruitment of scientists and community members to document as many living species as they can find in 24 hours. Other activities have been offered to involve and educate people about the area. Several organizations did offer an opportunity to help

people learn about the area and wildlife on Saturday and Sunday, setting up informational tables by the pavilion.

Organizations and people involved in both observations and education include: Mile High Bugs, Aiken Audubon Society, Colorado Native Plant Society, Colorado College, Fort Carson, Lauren Livo; Max Canestorp-US Fish and Wildlife Service (retired), Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Colorado Springs Trails Open Spaces and Parks (TOPS) Rangers, Denver Botanic Gardens, Rocky Mountain Field Institute, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Garden of the Gods Rangers, and the Friends of Red Rock Canyon.

Observations recorded are for the month of July, most from the weekend BioBlitz, show 1,094 observations done by 44 people.

Total number of species observed was 515.

Observed were: 68 species of birds, 4 species of reptiles and amphibians, 10 species of mammals, 299 insects and spiders along with 142 plants. This is a snapshot in time of what lives in Red Rock Canyon. Observations over time would be more helpful for a complete picture. You can help collect and view the observations at: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/red-rock-canyon-open-space-bioblitz-colorado-springs-trails-open-spaces-and-parks> All data can be found at this website.

Comments from biologists include: Good mammal biodiversity, Biota are a testament to excellent park management, and Biodiversity in the open space is astounding, especially considering its heavy use. No BioBlitzes are planned at this time for the future in Red Rock Canyon.



*Colorado Parks and Wildlife attempting to net bats over the pond during the evening. When bats first come out for the night they generally go to open water for a drink.*

## Heart of the Canyon Trail Update

You may be wondering what happen to FoRRC plans to build the Heart of the Canyon Trail. Well, we have made some progress but we have such a long way to go.

To remind you - the trail is on the Red Rock Canyon master plan. It allows visitors to make a one hour loop from the picnic parking lot (up Red Rock Canyon Trail crossing over east to the Red Rock Rim Trail and back) which avoids the landfill. The City plans to eliminate this connector trail between the two canyons and direct visitors on a longer loop through the middle of the landfill. They plan to change the master plan without open public engagement.



*This area has been damaged and marked as permanently closed. Why?*

The City says the trail is unsustainable and unnecessary. The City plans to remove the trail from the master plan over the strong objection of the Friends of Red Rock Canyon. The TOPS Working Committee voted to amend the master plan and remove the trail. The Parks Advisory Board must approve the City's recommendation. We are unhappy!

We have had many meetings with city officials and some progress has been made. We agreed that the trail could be taken off the maps temporarily (because the trail does not exist) – but that does not mean that it is removed from the master plan.



*This would be the view from the Heart of the Canyon Trail*

The City is working with us to create a formal written policy about how to change a park master plan when there is opposition from friends and user groups. The new policy would include a public process and specific criteria that the Parks Advisory Board must consider in deciding whether to amend a master plan.

The City is right that the trail may difficult to build, given the lay of the land. That is why the City and FoRRC need a professional to design the trail and to estimate the cost of construction. While we are at it, there are some land erosion issues that need to be fixed in the area with or without the trail.



*Let's fix storm water management problems and keep people off the landfill.*



## Mountain Biking News

As the holidays approach and wintery weather has arrived, it's a good time to reflect on the state of mountain biking in Red Rock Canyon Open Space. 2019 has been a good year for mountain biking in the Canyon.

We've seen the opening of new sections of trail, lots of volunteer days to build/reroute and maintain existing trails, and improvements to the MTB skills area at the north end of the park. Various volunteer teams from Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates (<https://www.medwheel.org>) to bike industry leader SRAM to student-athletes from the Manitou Monsters mountain bike team (<https://manitoumtbteam.com>), as well as members of the Friends of Red Rock Canyon Board, have all contributed time and energy to making the park a better place to ride.



Special thanks goes out to Stacy Gery, owner of MTB with Stacy (<http://www.mtbwithstacy.com>), for officially adopting the skills park and ensuring it gets the TLC it needs from time to time!

Looking forward to the new year, a number of MTB-related plans are in the works, such as extending the Lions Trail, adding new connectors on the south end of the park per the Master Plan, and potentially rerouting some sections of unsustainable trail. We're also looking to work with other Friends groups, Medicine Wheel, and the City on how best to manage increasing demand from e-bike riders, who are currently not allowed on singletrack in city parks.

In the meantime enjoy the trails this winter with a fat bike (or even a regular MTB!), just please be sure to treat our trails well after a snow and either wait for them to dry out or ride early or late when the snow is still frozen.



## Climbing News

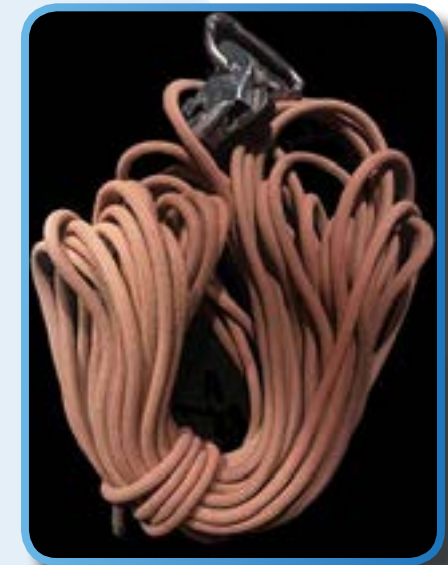
More climbers than ever appear to be getting vertical at Red Rock Canyon this year. Local climbers with the Pikes Peak Climber's Alliance have replaced some of the top bolt anchors on The Whale and Ripple Wall in the early summer. Plans for next year include replacing most of the bolt anchors on the east side of the canyon—Westbay Wall, Sayers Wall, and Ripple Wall—with new stainless steel, glue-in Wave bolts.

The PPCA intended to install glue-in bolt anchors on the ledge above the Toprope Wall in 2019 but were unable to reach a consensus on where the anchors should be and how many should be placed. For safety there should be at least 4 sets of anchors below the clifftop edge so that ropes don't continue to abrade that upper edge. To do that would require placing additional bolt anchors on the ledge above so that climbers could use them to safely access the anchors below the cliff edge. We also want input from the city parks department on the number of anchors and their location before drilling and installing them.

In July several board members from the Friends of Red Rock Canyon teamed up with members of the Pikes Peak Climber's Alliance board to repair an

eroded trail section on the north Whale climber access trail. Wooden ties were anchored and backfilled to create steps up the trail.

Climber projects for 2020 include building an access trail to the Secret Slab on the Section 16 parcel and an improved access trail to the Swanger Slab at the junction of the Red Rock Canyon Trail and Roundup Trail in the upper canyon.



## New Trails

Plans are underway to build the Meadow Loop Trail that is designated in the Master Plan. The Meadow Loop Trail will start at the intersection of Section 16 and Ridgeline Trails (near the two benches) and run in a northerly direction where it will intersect with the Connector Trail that runs between Red Rock Canyon Overlook Trail and the north end of the Ridgeline Trail. This will be a green trail and will offer an alternative route to the black Ridgeline Trail. The new trail will be machine built by an independent contractor. The plan is to have it completed this spring. Representatives of Friends of Red Rock Canyon Open Space and Medicine Wheel walked the proposed route with the Parks

Department trail designer to tweak the route. Discussions are also underway to re-route the half-pipe trail that connects the north end of the Ridgeline Trail with the terminus of the 26th Street Trail. The half-pipe trail is not sustainable in its current condition. The re-route will need to be sensitive to an Archeo-Paleo Study area and pristine rock outcroppings. Representatives of the Parks Department, Medicine Wheel and Friends of Red Rock Canyon Open Space are trying to reach a consensus on the best route given the existing conditions.



## David Valier Honored

Each year we acknowledge and honor a citizen who has been an outstanding volunteer and steward of our public lands. This year David received the accolades, because of his years of supporting FoRRC. He has been our great treasurer for countless years. He is one of the best crew leaders and rock-work trail builders. He is always helping with educational and community engagement programs. His positive can-do attitude makes volunteering enjoyable and productive.



**Thank you David!**

## Sharon Milito Honored With Spirit of the Springs Award

Sharon Milito has long been active with Red Rock Canyon. Recently, she was the main person to organize the BioBlitz in Red Rock Canyon this summer. She was surprised to be honored by John Suthers, Mayor of Colorado Springs, with the prestigious “Spirit of the Springs” Award on the last day of the BioBlitz in Red Rock Canyon. She has played a leading role with other BioBlitzes in several other Open Spaces and Parks in the Springs as well. Sharon, a retired elementary school teacher, has long been active with Red Rock Canyon Open Space. She worked on an initial survey of Geology of Red Rock Canyon before it became an Open Space with the City of Colorado Springs. She coauthored the book, *Geologic Folio; Red Rock Canyon Open Space, Colorado Springs, Colorado*, with Ken Weissenburger and Don Ellis. The book presently is out of print.

The Friends of Red Rock Canyon have been working to help the authors get the book back in print. Hopefully we will be able to announce the second edition will be available soon!



*Sharon Milito is awarded the “Spirit of the Springs” Award by John Suthers at Red Rock Canyon*

## Comments From Our Park Ranger

As 2019 winds down and we prepare for an exciting and productive 2020, I'd like to share some of the projects and initiatives which have been launched by Colorado Springs' Regional parks, Trails, and Open Space:

- For Earth Day, the city partnered with Rocky Mountain Field Institute and Friends of Red Rock Canyon to host 67 volunteers to restore a series of rogue trails along the top of the cliffs above the Red Rock Rim Trail. We are already planning similar events for next year, and hope to restore several sections of rogue trail throughout the park.
- The TOPS department is leading the charge for Colorado Springs to be the first Leave No Trace Gold Standard CITY- we are known as Olympic City, and we are going for the gold! Gold Standard sites are sites which are recognized as being exemplary models for other public lands in educating visitors about Leave No Trace ethics and practices. For Red Rock Canyon specifically, we plan to incorporate Leave No Trace language in future signage, and offer LNT trainer courses led by our ranger team for our community partners such as FoRRC.



- With the hiring of additional staff, the city has been able to offer an increased number of interpretive and educational programs. In 2019, we offered several one-off events like Old Stuff Day and a VERY chilly First Day Hike! We have also begun leading a field trip program that explores the human and paleontological history of Red Rock Canyon. We were also able to offer a “painting in the park” program, providing materials and guidance for visitors to create their own paintings at the Bock Pavilion. We are excited to continue developing and offering a variety of new programs.
- Illegal camping continues to be an issue at Red Rock Canyon. Park staff have worked to remove a number of camp sites from Red Rock Canyon and have taken steps to prevent camping on park property. We need your help! If you see signs of camping at Red Rock Canyon, please let Park Staff know so we can address it ASAP.
- Work has begun on the Meadows Trail on the South side of Red Rock Canyon. This trail will connect the Section 16 Trail and the Red Rock Canyon Overlook Trail, roughly paralleling the Ridgeline Trail.
- Park staff worked with a crew from Mile High Youth Corps to construct timber steps and other improvements along the Contemplative Trail and at the top of Mesa Trail, as well as restoring several rogue trail restorations.





## Joe Fabeck Memorial

Joe Fabeck passed away in May of this year. He deserves to be honored as a motivating force for saving Red Rock Canyon as public open space. He was a character in the history of the Pikes Peak front range who will impact generations to come. Without Joe and others this land we love would likely have been developed with houses, a golf course and businesses. At the turn of the century many people had dedicated themselves to saving some of our local natural habitats and beautiful lands from urban sprawl and environmental degradation. We were working for creating a healthy sustainable relationship between nature and people. But it was Joe Fabeck who had the vision and grit to recognize that ALL of Red Rock Canyon should be saved for public use.

The first step in saving the Bock property was to create public awareness that Red Rock Canyon was the other half of the Garden of the Gods rock formations. Joe Fabeck was driven and tireless in spreading the word. He did public hikes in the canyon, advocated at public meetings and wrote numerous letters and articles about the historic opportunity we had to save this wonderland for future generations. He was the back bone of the Red Rock Canyon Committee. While many of us were willing to compromise to receive some public trails on the property, Joe was aggressive and adamant that open space advocates should not give in. Luckily we listened and we persuaded the local governments to protect the area rather than give

into moneyed interests.

Joe Fabeck was a very dynamic and passionate person. He both challenged norms and supported good causes wherever he went. He had a full career as an executive at General Electric, Holly Foods and C&H Sugar Company. Then he went on to add his volunteer support to local non-profits. He was a significant supporter of preserving and rehabbing the Carnegie Library of Manitou Springs. He selflessly volunteered for community organizations and events like the Common Wheel Arts Festival and the Manitou Chamber of Commerce. Joe also had a caring side to him as he demonstrated by his loving care of his wife Diane. Joe was rightly very proud of his contribution to the quality of life for his community. We are proud of him too.



## Thoughts from TOSC

What kind of traveler are you? Do you use Trip Advisor to discover popular parks or do you stop at a gas station and ask the cashier where all the locals like to explore? Here in the Springs, the majority of tourists will find the Garden of the Gods. The tourists who dare to ask a local will not hear about Kissing Camels or Balanced Rock.

Instead, they will be told to visit the Quarry or the Contemplative trail in Red Rock Canyon. Avid park users cringe when they see parking lots fill in the summer, but these visitors are the lifeblood to our community. These are the tourists who visit Old Colorado City cafes before traversing the steps of the Quarry.

## Procedures For Amending Park And Open Space Master Plans

Earlier this year, it came to our attention that the City does not have formal procedures for amending park and open space master plans, including the Red Rock Canyon Open Space Master Plan. Therefore, with the blessings of some representatives of the Parks Department, our Board drafted procedures that include a public process and specific criteria that the Parks Advisory Committee should consider in deciding to grant an application to amend a master plan.

The proposed procedures have been reviewed with several of the Friends Groups, user and stakeholder groups and TOSC. Tweaks were made based on the input we received from these groups and then the proposed procedures were submitted to the Parks Department in early November. We are hoping that these procedures for amending master plans will be adopted in the near future so that everyone will know the rules and we will have formal written procedures to follow.

## Colorado Public Lands Day

RMFI, Rocky Mountain Field Institute, along with the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, help to organize and celebrate Colorado Public Lands Day in Red Rock Canyon. The Friends helped in planning the trail work, offering a public hike in the afternoon, along with financing some of the midday lunch for the volunteers working on the trail.

RMFI lead a trail work project in the morning, working to close a long social trail going through a sensitive wildlife area, off the Round Up Trail. Several crews worked at both ends, with other crews helping to control erosion caused by the social trail.

Lunch was supplied by La'au's Taco Shop with help from the Friends of Red Rock Canyon. A recreational hike was then offered by UpaDowna. A Geology hike was offered by the Friends of Red Rock Canyon, lead by Shanti Toll. After the hikes, an after party was hosted by Fossil Craft Beer Company. The brewery released an "RMFI-IPA" collaborative beer that was brewed using local ingredients.



*A crew working to control erosion on a steep hillside. Jared, a RMFI crew leader, is leaning off to the side so others can be in the picture.*



(Heart of the Canyon continued from page 8)

Once we have the actual trail design and costs, then the City and the public can decide whether it is worth it to build the trail. What are the benefits and drawbacks? We will keep you in the loop about the progress and issues as we move forward. Patience, all you Red Rock Canyon supporters, and **happy new year.**

**For more information, see our "Heart of the Canyon" presentation at**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xp\\_Av30WrxA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xp_Av30WrxA)



*Volunteers want to help with building the Heart of the Canyon.*



*Trail possibility #1  
(Harry Hamill from Medicine Wheel Trail Advocates)*



*Trail possibility #2  
(Mike Scott and Friends of Red Rock Canyon)*

(Thoughts from TOSC continued from page 8)

These are the tourists who stay at the small business motels along Colorado Avenue before trying the Intemann trail. Because our parks are one of the biggest draws for tourists, we need to make sure their best interests are considered in how we plan and maintain our open spaces. Having easy to read maps at trailheads and clear wayfinding signage along trails is a tremendous help

to someone who is visiting for the first time (or even their 100th time). So the next time a person asks you for a recommendation on a trail to explore, I hope you give the insider tip and share a little piece of your paradise with them.



## Membership Form for Friends of Red Rock Canyon

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter Delivery Preference: Via email (full-color, recommended)  Via postal mail

Yes, I want to join Friends of Red Rock Canyon for the coming year

Individual/Family membership (\$15)  Organization / Business membership (\$30)

I would like to help even more with a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

I would like to be involved in volunteer efforts Please describe your interest:

Please mail this membership for with your check to:

**Friends of Red Rock Canyon**

PO Box 6754

Colorado Springs, CO 80904-6754

## Neighborhood Parking Problem Near Red Rock Canyon Main Entrance

The Board of Directors of the Friends of Red Rock Canyon have been approached by some concerned citizens who reside in the neighborhood just west of the main entrance to the open space. These citizens shared accounts of visitors to Red Rock Canyon parking in their neighborhood causing congestion and safety issues for the residents there as well as for the visitors themselves.

Park visitors routinely park on both sides of the road approaching their houses and in front of houses. This frequently leaves only one, narrow lane for vehicles to egress and ingress the area, often forcing one vehicle to back up to allow another vehicle through.

The Board of Directors voted to support these residents in their effort to engage city and county officials to take actions necessary to resolve this situation. We respectfully request all park users help the Friends of Red Rock Canyon to be good neighbors to the residents to the west of the main entrance and to please park only on park property.

Also, there is designated parking for large vehicles and trailers at the 31 st street parking lot.



## **The Red Rock Rag**

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RENEWAL DATE**

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## **AmazonSmile**

Many people do not realize that the shopping they do on Amazon can also be used to support many of their favorite non-profits. Simply by using AmazonSmile, you can purchase the same products you get through Amazon with a certain percent going to the charity or charities you choose. If you would like to support the Friends of Red Rock Canyon using AmazonSmile, simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) and add us by our founding name: **Red Rock Canyon Foundation** (not the Friends).

**We appreciate your support!**



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